

E. F. Law Was Early Fairbury Doctor and Farmer

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Dr. E. F. Law and his son, Dr. Otis Law, were early Fairbury medical doctors, and they owned farmland in Avoca Township north of Fairbury. The story of the Law family began with the birth of George Law in 1822 in Northamptonshire, England, about 75 miles northwest of London. In 1853, thirty-one-year-old George Law married 26-year-old Alice Jellis in England. George and Alice Law had ten children.

Shortly after they were married, the George Law family emigrated from England to Avoca Township, close to the village of McDowell. In the 1860 U.S. Census, the George Law family lived in the Pontiac area, and he was a farmer.

In 1873, Edward Frederick Law, the youngest child of George and Alice Law, was born near McDowell. In the 1880 Census, the George Law family lived in Eppards Point Township, near McDowell. Seven children were still living at home.

Alice Law, 56, died in 1884. She was buried in the Houder Cemetery, which is on Billet Road, about two miles north of McDowell. Edward F. Law attended a country school near McDowell and then Pontiac High School. He graduated from the Grand Prairie Seminary in Onarga and taught school for several years.

E. F. Law graduated from Rush Medical College in 1903. Edward was 30 years old when he finished medical school and started his first practice in Weston, Illinois. In 1905, George Law died at the age of 82. George was buried with his wife in the Houder Cemetery.

In 1909, Dr. E. F. Law married Louisa Mary "Lucy" Householder. Edward was 35, and Lucy was 29 when they married. Edward and Lucy Law had two children. Their son Otis H. Law was born in 1910, and their daughter Anna Mae Law was born in 1914.

Dr. E. F. Law began experiencing health issues in 1917. He retired from his medical practice at age 44 and moved to his farm northwest of Fairbury.

In 1924, Dr. E. F. Law resumed his medical practice at age 51 in Fairbury. Dr. Law was known for his whimsical sense of humor, a humor that never bore a sting. A few moments of conversation with him was a pleasant experience, which many people enjoyed throughout the day. Dr. Law was very active in the Fairbury community. He was a member of the Methodist Church and served on the board of directors. Dr. Law also served on the Fairbury Township High School board of education. Dr. Law was the first president of the Fairbury Rotary Club and was a member of the Phi Chi Psi and Shore Acre social groups.

Otis Law graduated from Wesleyan University in 1932 and then attended and graduated from Vanderbilt Medical School. When he interned at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Dr. Otis Law met his future wife, Anna "Sue" Field. In 1936, Dr. Otis Law began his practice as a family physician in Pontiac.

The death of Dr. E. F. Law in 1937 was a shock to the Fairbury community. Dr. E. F. Law died at the age of 63 from a heart attack. On the way to his medical office in the Blade building at the southwest corner of Locust and Third Streets, Dr. E. F. Law became very ill. He made it into his medical office and telephoned Dr. H. C. Sauer. Dr. Sauer and Doctor W. A. Marshall both treated Doctor E. F. Law. They administered a stimulant to Dr. Law. He initially became better but then died later that day. The community was shocked at the death of Dr. Law because he was so well known in Fairbury. Dr. Law was buried in Graceland Cemetery. Dr. Law owned 240 acres of farmland in Avoca Township in Section 17. John Law, brother to Dr. Law, also owned 152 acres nearby in Section 20.

Shortly before he died, Dr. E. F. Law paid a professional photographer to take his picture. A copy of this photo was used in the Blade for his obituary in 1937. Recently, this portrait was found when a family was cleaning their attic. The family donated the photograph to the Fairbury Echoes Museum.

In 1939, twenty-eight-year-old Dr. Otis Law married twenty-five-year-old Sue Field. Otis and Sue Law had two children.

In 1941, John Law and his neighbors threshed the wheat grown on John's farmland and Dr. E. F. Law's farmland nearby. A professional photographer went to the farm and took two photographs of the men and the threshing scene. Two copies of these 80-year-old photographs still survive today. The farmers depicted in these photos include John Law, Clarence Francis Maley, Roy Friant, Shelton Tucker, Raymond Tavener, Frank Masterson, Bud Wink, Munroe Garland, Wayne Ziller Sr., Wayne Ziller Jr., Clarence Friant, Walter Askew, Eldon Askew, Ed Snider, and Frank Webster.

1941 also marked the start of World War II. Dr. Otis Law served in the U.S. Army Air Corps's Flying Tigers in China. Dr. Otis Law practiced medicine in Pontiac from 1936 until 1974. After his medical career, Dr. Otis Law retired to Florida. He passed away in 1998 at the age of 88. His wife, Lucy Law, lived to be 100 years old and died in 2014. Both Dr. Otis Law and his wife were buried at Graceland Cemetery.

For over seven decades, Dr. E. F. Law and his son, Dr. Otis Law, provided medical care to the Fairbury and Pontiac area. The Law family also owned farmland northwest of Fairbury. Over the years, several different men tenant farmed this land for the Law family.



Dr. Edward Frederick Law (1873-1937) of
Fairbury, Illinois, Photo circa 1936.